

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Harris-Currin House
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number State Road 1129 ☒ not for publication
city, town Wilton ☒ vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Granville code 077 zip code 27522

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☒
- private
-
- ☐
- public-local
-
- ☐
- public-State
-
- ☐
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☐
- building(s)
-
- ☒
- district
-
- ☐
- site
-
- ☐
- structure
-
- ☐
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<u>1</u>	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic and Architectural Resources of
Granville County, N.C.Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

William S. Finley
State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

6-14-88

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Function or Use

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

domestic-single dwelling

Agriculture/Subsistence

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

foundation stone

walls weatherboard

roof metal

other brick

wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 DESCRIPTION

Set behind an expanse of yard and uncultivated fields that separate it from the intersection of two paved roads to its southeast, the circa 1883 Harris-Currin House is one of the most ornate and stylish late nineteenth century Queen Anne houses surviving in rural Granville County. Retaining only one outbuilding to its rear - a deteriorated, and therefore non-contributing, late nineteenth or early twentieth century stable - it was once the center of a thriving bright leaf tobacco farm. Twenty-one acres of that farm, now owned with the house by Lucius A. Currin's daughter, Ethel Stephenson, are included in the nomination, acres that contribute to the house's rural integrity.

Two stories tall and weatherboarded, the frame house is in plan and shape largely outside the I-house tradition that reigned supreme in rural Granville County in the 1880s. Its front section does have a center hallway bracketed by single rooms, but the house is actually L-plan in conception, with a triangular entrance foyer connecting its southeast front and southwest rear rooms. It also falls outside the tradition in the configuration and placement of its porch, roofs and chimneys. Its porch wraps around its northeast-facing front and southeast-facing side facades rather than just its front facade; it has a partially hipped roof, rather than a gable end one, and three facade gables, two to the front and one centered to the side; and it has only one exterior end chimney, its second main chimney a corbelled, interior stack between its southeast and southwest rooms.

Not only in plan and configuration is the house unusual for rural Granville County; its Queen Anne finish, particularly that of its porch, is the most ornate and complete surviving in the countryside from its period of construction. One story high and wrapping around the two main facades of the house, the porch is profusely decorated with sawn woodwork. Its decorative elements include turned posts, tiny spindles, sawn toothwork and pendants, and curlicued, looping brackets and infill. The house's two front facade gables are adorned with similarly articulated bargeboards and molded cornice returns. Its pedimented side gable is finished with patterned wood shingles. And, although its two-over-two windows are set in plain surrounds, its two-leaf front doorway is ornately finished with small inset panels and applied ornament.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

The plastered interior is more simply finished than the porch or gables. It features molded baseboards and surrounds and seven-panel doors with narrow horizontal panels sandwiched between three long and three short vertical panels. The mantels, with their peaked lintels and spindles and brackets, have been removed from the house and stored for safekeeping. The one-story rear kitchen and dining room ell is plainly finished. Not original to the house, it was probably added by Lucius Currin shortly after he acquired the property.

The house's complement of tobacco-farm outbuildings, but for an impressively large but deteriorated two-story wooden stable, have been destroyed, as has the small country store that Lucius Currin ran at the northwest corner of the junction of State Road 1129 and State Route 56.² The house is still neatly framed, however, in the triangle formed by a stand of woods to its rear and the two roads to its fore, within a sheltering swell of yard and former fields.

¹ Interview with Ethel Currin Stephenson, daughter of Lucius and Lelia Currin, September 28, 1987.

² Interview with Ethel Currin Stephenson, September 28, 1987.

Statement of Significance

ing official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Agriculture

Period of Significance

1880s-1937

Significant Dates

1880s

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Harris-Currin House is architecturally significant for its exuberant Queen Anne finish - a rare feature among surviving late nineteenth and early twentieth century farmhouses in rural Granville County - and historically significant as a physical exemplar of the tremendous bright-leaf-tobacco-generated wealth of the county during those years. (See Associated Property Type 3 - Bright Leaf Era Farmhouses and Tenant Houses - and Historic Context 2 - Bright Leaf Tobacco and Rural Granville County, 1866-1937) Built in the 1880s by Robert W. Harris on the sandy soil of southern Granville County so conducive to the raising of bright leaf tobacco, the house is unusually stylish in its finish. Although the county was producing enormous amounts of valuable, high quality tobacco in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and in the 1880s in particular, the vast majority of its farmhouses were simply finished, traditional structures. Juxtaposed with the expansive, up-to-date dwellings raised in Oxford during the bright leaf era, these plain structures suggest where the tobacco wealth was and was not being concentrated. Harris' house, with its L-shaped rather than one-room deep I-house plan and its luxuriant cut-out woodwork, was an exception to the rule of plainness of the standard rural county house, a statement of success and wealth raised on the very site where that wealth was produced. Although not exceptionally ornate or stylish by the standards of Oxford, the house remains one of the most fashionable rural dwellings surviving from the late nineteenth century in the county and one that most vibrantly bespeaks the wealth of the soil upon which it stands.

A prominent local citizen and prosperous farmer, Harris (1856-1918) purchased, in 1883, the 206 acre farm he was to raise his dwelling on from James and Mary Floyd for \$1,545.00 [Deed Book 37, Page 141]. He and his wife, Mary Ella White (1863-1928), sold the house and 157 1/4 acres of its land to Lucius A. Currin in 1905 for \$5,000.00 [Deed Book 58, Page 333]. As was so common among prosperous farm families during the period, they moved to Oxford. Harris' obituary described him most favorably:

Mr. Harris was a member of the Oxford Board of Commissioners for one term. He was a progressive citizen and was always found on the right side of public issues. He was a member of the Oxford Methodist Church and will be greatly missed in this community."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Lucius Currin (1878-1958) lived in the house, raising bright leaf tobacco on its acreage, until his death 53 years after its purchase. It has been empty since the early 1980s, when his second wife, Lelia Bobbitt (1887-1984), moved from it because of illness.⁴ It is maintained in fair condition by his heirs, who plan to restore it in 1988.

Although traditionally farmed within the past 50 years - a deteriorated frame stable that once held the animals that drew its farm equipment still stands to its rear - it has not achieved exceptional significance within the past half century and its period of significance therefore closes with 1937.

¹According to the tenth and eleventh federal agricultural censuses, Granville County produced 4,606,358 pounds of tobacco in 1880 - the most in the state - and 4,170,071 pounds in 1890 - just shy of tops in the state, even though the county had lost considerable land in its 1881 division. On the quality of Granville County tobacco, see Nannie May Tilley, The Bright Tobacco Industry, 1860-1929 (Chapel Hill, 1948), pp. 113, 132, 133 and 135, and "Report on the Culture and Curing of Tobacco in the United States" by J. B. Killebrew in the Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, p. 705.

²The Harrises purchased Cherry Hill Mansion in northwest Oxford, the former home of Oxford developer B. H. Cozart, for \$7,500.00, \$2,500.00 more than their 157 acre farm and house brought [Deed Book 59, Page 388, 1905].

³Oxford Public Ledger, October 15, 1918.

⁴Interview with Ethel Currin Stephenson, daughter of Lucius and Lelia Currin, September 28, 1987.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 21.5 acres

UTM References

A

17	716320	4002510
Zone	Easting	Northing

C

17	716240	4002200
Zone	Easting	Northing

B

17	716680	4002250
Zone	Easting	Northing

D

Zone	Easting	Northing

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Harris-Currin House is the entire parcel owned by Mrs. Ethel Stephenson which is delineated on the accompanying 1987 survey map on the property.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries which follow the property lines of Ethel Stephenson as delineated on the accompanying 1987 survey map includes the house and fields that have been a historic part of the property, maintain historic integrity, and conveys the property's historic setting. The property outside these boundaries has been excluded because it has been divided into several parcels owned by different family members and no longer retains the historic integrity of being a single farm.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marvin Brown/Architectural Historian & Patricia Esperon/Historian

organization Granville-Oxford Historic Survey date 11/13/87

street & number P.O. Box 1556 (State Hist. Pres. Office) telephone 919-693-1491

city or town Oxford state N.C. zip code 27565

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Granville County Deeds. Granville County Courthouse, Oxford, N.C.

Interview with Ethel Currin Stephenson, daughter of Lucius and Lelia Currin, September 28, 1987.

Killebrew, J. B. "Report on the Culture and Curing of Tobacco in the United States," Tenth Census of the United States, 1880.

Oxford Public Ledger, October 15, 1918. Robert W. Harris' obituary, located at Richard H. Thornton Public Library, Oxford, N.C.

Tilley, Nannie May. The Bright-Tobacco Industry, 1860-1929. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1948.



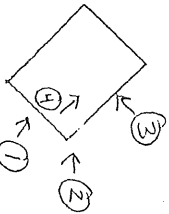
PROPERTY LINE

Contributing
site fields

deteriorated frame stable,
non-contributing building



late 19th century
frame dwelling -
contributing building



PROPERTY LINE

State Road 1129

N.C. Highway 50

PROPERTY LINE

Harris-Carrin House

Granville County, N.C.

Approximately 21 acres

Approximate scale 1"=200'

Bobbit Rogers
house + Tobacco
manufactory District
Granville County, N.C.
road: Wilton, N.C.
scale: 1:24,000

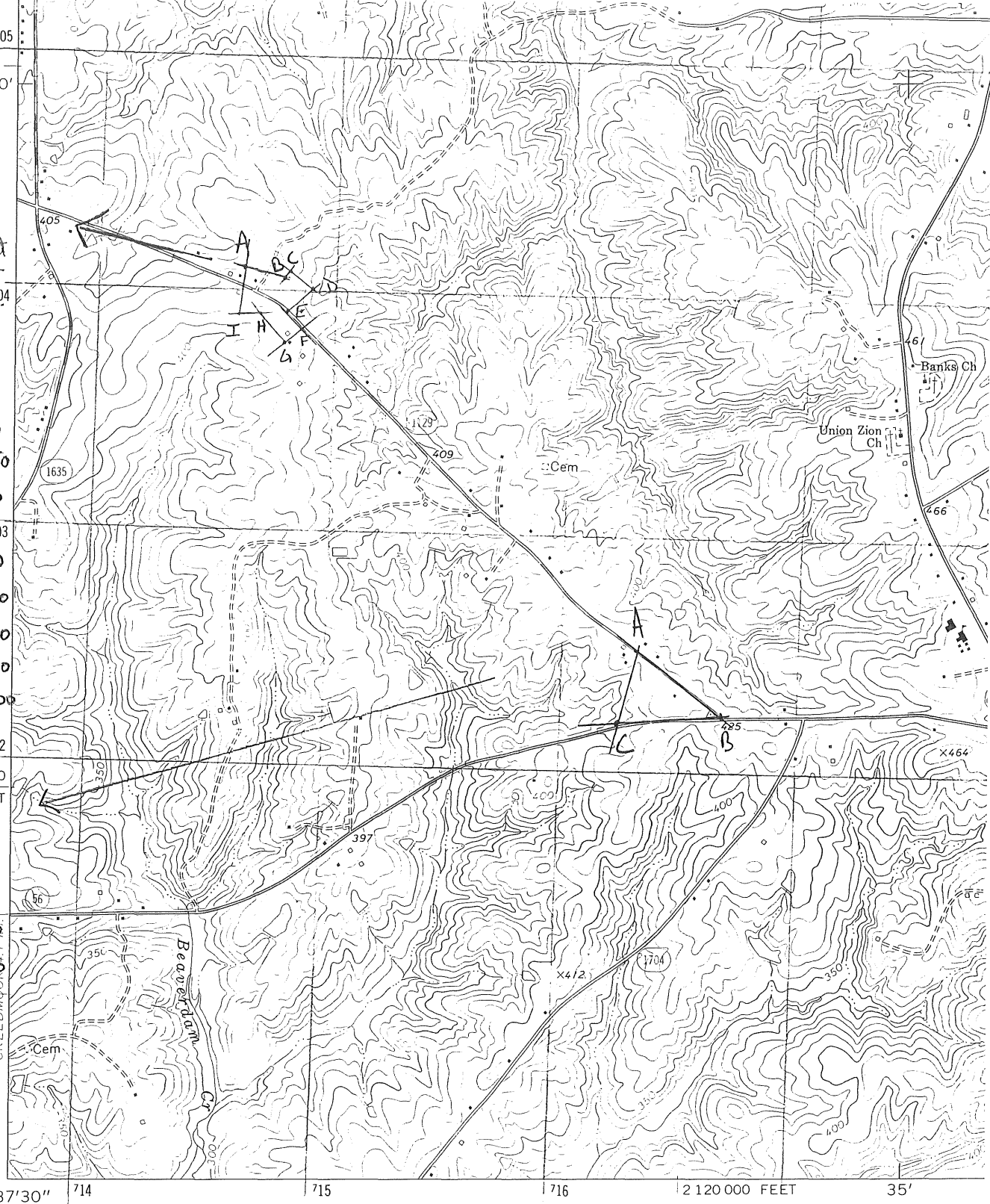
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 17 714800 4004080
 17 714900 400401003
 17 714790 4003910
 17 714850 4003840
 17 714780 4003780
 17 714680 4003910
 17 714590 4003900

arris-Currin House
Granville County, N.C.
road: Wilton, N.C.
scale: 1:24,000

17 716320 4002510
 17 716680 4002250
 17 716240 4002200

36°07'30"
 78°37'30"

(CREEDMOOR)
 525611 SW



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
 Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, USCE, and North Carolina Geodetic Survey
 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
 taken 1974. Field checked 1974
 Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: North Carolina coordinate
 system (Lambert conformal conic)
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
 zone 17, shown in blue. 1927 North American datum

